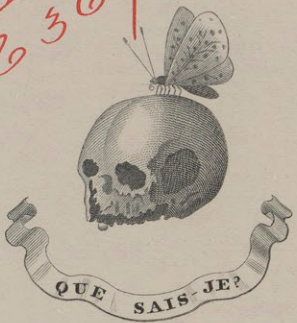




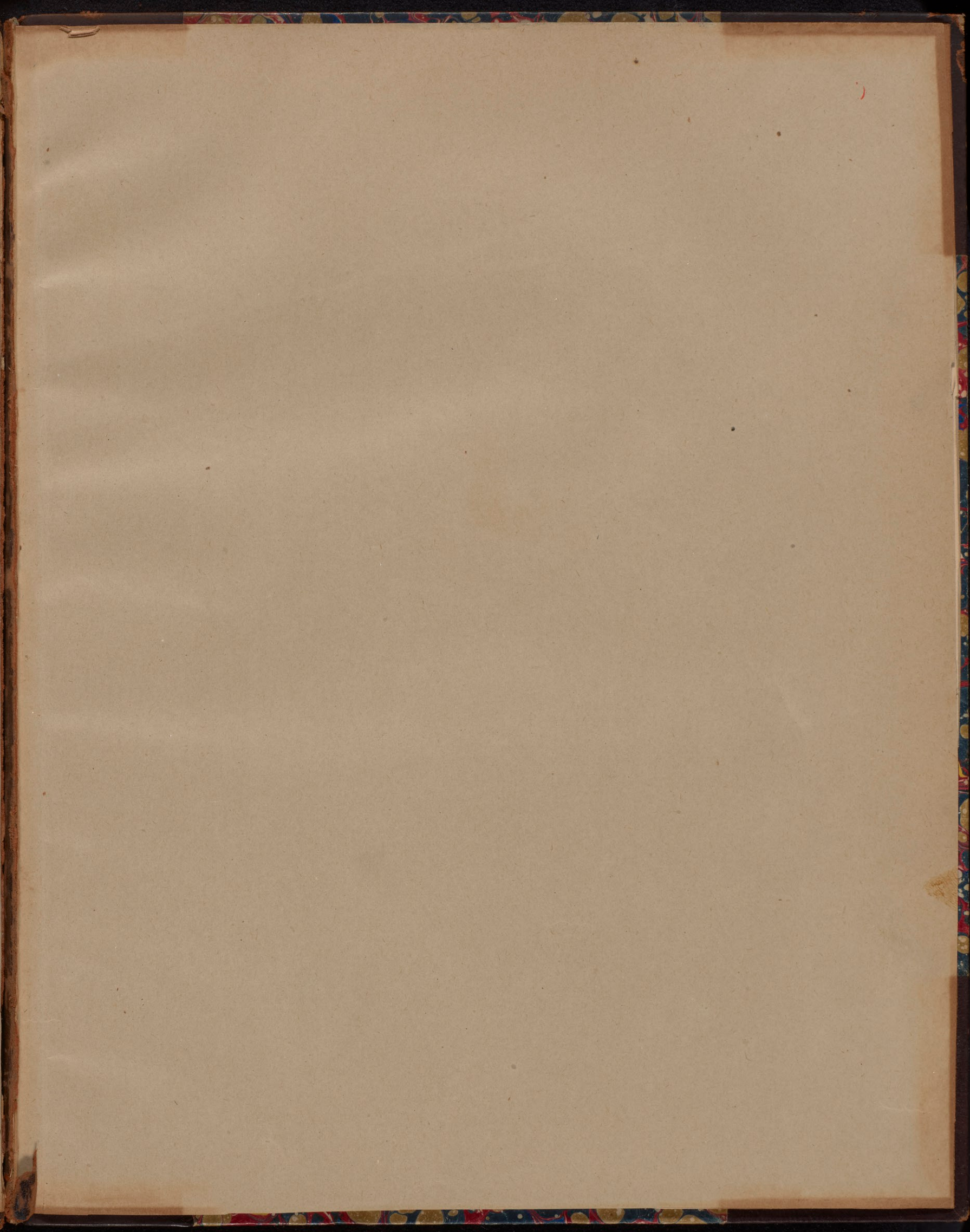
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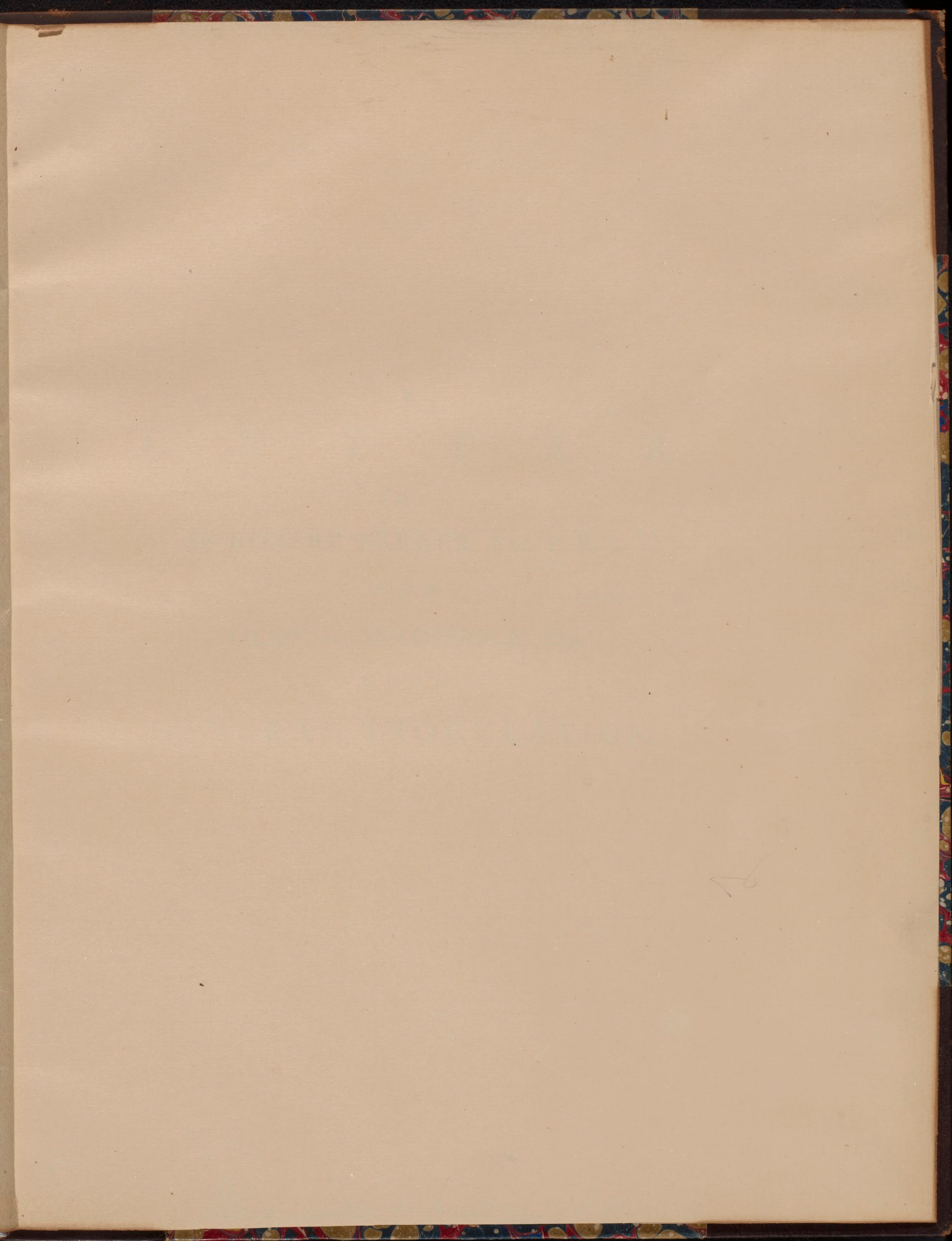
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Sam. Lewis M.D.





L E T T E R

TO

Sir ROBERT BARKER, Knt. F. R. S.

A N D

GEORGE STACPOOLE, Esq;

U P O N

GENERAL INOCULATION.

Tolle mihi é causa nomen Catonis: remove, ac prætermitte
auctoritatem, quæ in judiciis aut nihil valere, aut ad salutem
debet valere,

CICERO in Muræn.

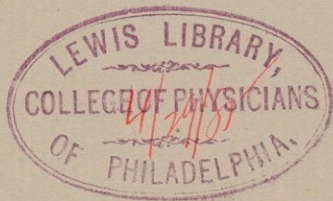
A
L E T T E R
T O
Sir ROBERT BARKER, Knt. F. R. S.
A N D
GEORGE STACPOOLE, Esq;
U P O N
GENERAL INOCULATION.

By JOHN COAKLEY LETTSOM, M. D. F. R. S. & S. A.

L O N D O N :

Printed for EDWARD and CHARLES DILLY.

M.DCC.LXXVIII.



L E T T E R

ST ROBERT BARKER, Knt. F.R.S.

TO

ST ROBERT BARKER, Knt. F.R.S.

GEORGE STACPOOLE, Esq.

AND

GEORGE STACPOOLE, Esq.

UPON

GENERAL INOCULATION.

By John Cowley Littson, M.D. F.R.S. & S.A.

L O N D O N :

Printed for EDWARD and CHARLES DILLY.

MDCCLXXXIII

T O

Sir ROBERT BARKER, Knt.

A N D

GEORGE STACPOOLE, Esq;

GENTLEMEN,

WHEN I had the favour of dining with you early in the last month, I experienced the highest satisfaction from the candid manner of your investigating the practice of Inoculation, and from your approbation of the success^a which hath hitherto attended an institution under your patronage, for extending the advantages of it to the community in general. The humanity and discernment which your observations evinced,

^a The Society for General Inoculation was established in the year 1775, and after considerable practice, not one patient has died under Inoculation; nor has there occurred any example to prove that the Natural Small-Pox has been augmented by it.

and

and the desire you expressed to obtain the most competent information for ascertaining, with precision, the utility of General Inoculation, induce me to lay before you the following remarks.

From an early introduction into a very extensive charitable institution, I became acquainted with many thousands of poor families in this metropolis, which afforded me an opportunity of seeing the most frequent and destructive diseases under which they laboured, and suggested the means of obviating, in some measure, the misery and fatality so prevalent among them.

You must have perceived, with pain, the numerous list of victims which the bills of mortality annually exhibit under the article of Small-Pox^b; and must have lamented that the salutary aid of Inoculation had not been sooner extended, in order to prevent the ravages of that distemper among the labouring poor, which persons of affluence are so happily enabled to obviate. But affecting as this list of mortality may appear, it does not include the whole of the destruction made by the Natural Small-Pox, a part of which is always ascribed to other causes.

^b About 2500 appear to die annually by the Small-Pox within the bills of mortality.

Whether

Whether it proceeds from the injudicious management among the poor, or from the virulence of the distemper, or rather from a combination of both these causes, there is reason to believe that nearly double the number die annually in the metropolis of the Natural Small-Pox, more than the bills of mortality ascertain.

It has been a popular objection against Inoculation, that various diseases are ingrafted by it, and thereby communicated to healthy persons^c: this argument is, however, more specious than solid: in the practice of Inoculation, the matter may almost always be procured from the most healthy subjects, and the disease is usually milder; but contagion being indiscriminate, the effects cannot be so distinctly ascertained. This suggestion is not the result of mere theory, but of real observation. In the access which my office gave me to the families of the poor, I met with the most affecting instances of havock made by the Natural Small-Pox, not merely from the imme-

^c So great has been this prejudice, that I have frequently known trifling eruptions attributed to Inoculation, in persons who have had this operation practised upon them at least ten years before. Indeed there is seldom any disease of the skin, which happens within four or five years after Inoculation, but what is attributed to its effects.

diate fatality of that disorder, but the effects of it, which, in many instances, were likely to continue the patients monuments of misery through life. Some have been deprived of sight^d; many have been afflicted with the evil and scrophulous complaints, to which they had been previously strangers^e; many have been disabled in their limbs, and ever after become burthenfome to their families and to the community; and more still have languished under hectic symptoms, and at length, emaciated and totally debilitated, they have sunk under their miseries, and filled up the amazing list of consumptions, many of which originated from the violence of the Natural Small-Pox^f.

Hence I plainly perceived, that the censures so freely passed on Inoculation in these respects, were more justly due to the

^d From the strictest inquiry I have been capable of making, I imagine that annually about twenty persons in this city lose their eye-sight by the effects of the Natural Small-Pox; but I never yet heard of any instance of this melancholy kind from Inoculation.

^e I have now under my care several persons, in whom the scrophula can be traced to no other cause.

^f About 4500 persons appear, by the bills of mortality, to die yearly under Consumptions; and if we add the number ascribed to the Phthysick, they will amount annually to 5000; and these diseases are frequently, as I have often experienced, the consequence of the Small-Pox.

Natural

Natural Small-Pox ; and that many were sacrificed by the latter, which the bills of mortality by no means ascertained.

When the subjects who had thus miserably suffered, were brought to me, under the most untractable and painful complaints, the result of this disease, I could not hesitate to recommend to the parents, the use of Inoculation for their other children ; and have generally found that they would have gladly accepted of this providential aid, if a proper opportunity had been afforded them. I found less difficulty to overcome their prejudices against Inoculation itself, than their reluctance to leave their families in their own case, or to part with their children into the hands of strangers. But however disposed they might be to admit this salutary practice, there is no place instituted within the bills of mortality for the reception of the infant poor^s, so that the subjects who are most liable to the ravages of the Natural Small-Pox, are the only persons excluded from relief by Inoculation.

In this situation the poor seemed only desirous to have the blessing of Inoculation extended to their families in the same

^s It is an established regulation at the Small-Pox Hospital, to admit no person to the benefit of it under seven years of age.

manner as persons of property are enabled to embrace it; and as I could not perceive any reasonable argument in support of inoculating persons of fortune at their own houses, which might not, from the same principles of humanity and true policy, be extended also to the poor, I have often lamented, that so great a benefit should have been so long monopolized by the former, while the latter had no alternative but to be separated from their families, or run the risk of a fatal disease.

After experiencing the great advantages of administering relief in other diseases, to thousands of the poor, at their own habitations, I did not doubt but a public institution, for the purpose of extending the aid of Inoculation in a similar manner, would save many lives, avert a number of diseases consequent upon the Natural Small-Pox, and essentially serve the community.

But long before any such institution took place, I have been entreated by many of the poor, to procure them the benefit of this operation. In some instances, indeed, where the Natural Small-Pox has appeared in confined streets and courts, and proved remarkably fatal, I have not only proposed Inoculation, but attended such as accepted it, during the progress of the
 Natural

Natural Infection in the neighbourhood; and, contrary to what I had formerly imagined, the contagion has been speedily checked.

Such examples arising within my own observation, convinced me, that the infection from Inoculation was in general so mild, as that, with proper precautions, the practice might be safely extended to the poor in every part of the metropolis, which would preserve the lives of many promising children, who might either be lost to the community from the fatality of the Natural Infection, or become burthensome from the consequences of it.

When a plan therefore for the General Inoculation of the Poor, was proposed by persons of judgment as well as of humanity, it obtained my hearty concurrence; as it did not originate from party motives, or a theoretic and warm imagination, but was the result of attentive experience, and had no object in view but the public good.

It was, however, a subject of too great importance to the community, to allow any means to be neglected that might tend to elucidate either its injuries or benefits. This induced the medical practitioners carefully to notice every circumstance

C

that

that could operate on either side; every patient's case was minutely specified, and the most ample information was procured; the result of which has been, that no instance hath occurred during the space of two years, from whence it could be inferred that Inoculation had communicated the disease to a single person, but many to prove that it has been the means of obviating the Natural Infection, and consequently lessening the fatality of the disease.

The practice of Inoculation upon the plan adopted by the Society, among whom you have condescended to take a distinguished part, appeared of so much importance, that the officers of the institution have also been induced to make every enquiry that could ascertain its effects; and the result has proved, that the sum of good so greatly exceeds the sum of evil, that the more general Inoculation becomes, the more extensive and lasting will be the advantage of the public.

One instance, in confirmation of this conclusion, hath occurred at Ware in Hertfordshire, where the Small-Pox raged with considerable violence and fatality last summer. After about eighty persons had been carried off by the disease, a General Inoculation

Inoculation was proposed, to prevent those who had not yet been attacked, and whose number was still considerable, from sharing the same fate.

The alarm which had naturally been excited by so great an instance of fatality, induced most of the survivors to adopt this proposition; after which not one died, and the infection was totally eradicated.

Mankind are seldom unanimous in embracing the most plausible plans, and a few families in the town did not chuse to submit to Inoculation with the rest of their neighbours; not one of them, however, caught the infection, although Inoculation was otherwise general.

From this circumstance one may infer, that Inoculation does not in general spread the disease; and that partial Inoculation may sometimes be adviseable: indeed it is natural to imagine, that the infection must at least be lessened in proportion to the diminution of the violence of the disease; and in this view alone, the amazing difference must afford a prevailing argument in favour of Inoculation.

I do

I do not mean to enter into the merits of a contest, which has been lately carried on, between two gentlemen^h of great experience in the profession. I have no other point in view, but to ascertain clearly how far Inoculation, either in a partial or more general manner, may contribute to public utility. This is an enquiry of too much concern to be suffered to degenerate into a private controversy; it is only by a careful attention to facts, that a just criterion can be established.

Before I conclude, I beg leave to add, that though I am engaged in the plan for General Inoculation, an institution which has not been so fortunate as to have gained the patronage or approbation of the justly celebrated Baron Dimsdale, yet it has not arisen from the most distant idea of opposition to him. I acknowledge with pleasure, that I have long enjoyed the favour of his friendship, and the more intimately I have been acquainted with him, the more I admire and esteem his character as a gentleman, and his discernment as a physician; and I am persuaded, that he would as cordially as

^h Baron Dimsdale; and Doctor Watkinson, Physician to the Society for General Inoculation.

myself unite in promoting a plan for General Inoculation, if he had the same conviction of its public utility.

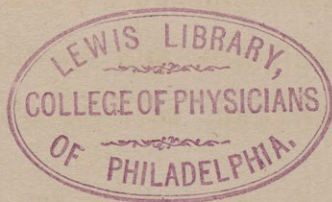
Upon such a principle, every man who wishes well to his fellow-creatures should found his conduct. I am convinced, Gentlemen, that this has been your motive for patronizing such an institution for General Inoculation; and upon the same principle

I beg leave to subscribe myself,

LONDON,
June 29, 1778.

With great respect,

JOHN COAKLEY LETTSOM.



myself unite in promoting a plan for General Association, if
 he had the same conviction of its public utility.
 Upon such a principle, every man who wishes well to his
 fellow-creatures should found his conduct. I am convinced,
 Gentlemen, that this has been your motive for patronizing
 such an institution for General Association; and upon the
 same principle

I beg leave to subscribe myself,

With great respect,

London,

June 20, 1793.

JOHN COAKLEY LETTISON.

